

Solomon Pt-2

King Solomon had it all. His fame, rulings and power were envied around the world. With his astute leadership, politically, his nation was stable and experienced peaceful borders with allied countries and monarchs. Financially, at his peak, 'King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth' (1 Kings 10:23). His riches and revenue were unrivalled in the known world.



Academically, his education, knowledge, philosophies and theological enlightenments were unsurpassed by any other teacher past or present.

Then comes 1 Kings chapter 11. Reading only six verses, it appears this chapter is inconsistent with the man previous chapters have described.

In chapter 11, Solomon's credibility is critically scrutinised. The truth is confronting. Scriptural candour reveals the king's corruption, stubbornness, arrogance, immorality, idolatry and wickedness have overtaken his life. It seems implausible to believe these verses are portraying the man known as the wisest man who ever lived.

The once-adored ruler and judge of Israel was now at the bedrock of his faith. His great enlightenment is now shrouded in darkness. Evil is camped on his doorstep.

Last week we saw the king as the nation's worship leader. This week we see he became a national disgrace.

In chapter 11, spiritually, Solomon is AWOL.

It begs the question:

How could the wisest man on earth be so stupid?

I hesitate to answer this. How can any mere mortal mind comprehend the decisions of the man renowned for his understandings, sophisticated intelligence and judgements? Fortunately, we have a Bible to help explain Solomon's decline.

Early in Solomon's rule, the Lord warned the young king not to accumulate wealth and prestige. He was instructed to follow the Lord God of his father wholeheartedly. Solomon was taught that obedience to God's ways would bring blessings; disobedience would bring disaster.

The warnings were there, but Solomon ignored them one by one.

Pride crept into Solomon's life even though the prophet Nathan would have warned that egotism would bring his downfall (1 Kings 17:20). This is evidenced when his palace took thirteen years to build (1 Kings 7:1), while God's temple took seven years (1 Kings 6:38).

Deuteronomy 17:17 was the key text for every King to uphold. The verse clearly warns all kings to be faithfully monogamous, not amass wealth and to guard their hearts. Disregarding that command, Solomon acquired numerous chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses (1 Kings 10:26).

Neglecting God's Word, with a fleet of ships Solomon hoarded unparalleled wealth (1 Kings 9:26-28, 10:22). He collected gold and revenues from kings and governors (1 Kings 10:14-15). He was probably the first billionaire.

Solomon's own words condemn him, 'A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished' (Proverbs 28:20).

Additionally, Solomon ignored God's commands when he began to marry foreign women (1 Kings 9:16), which ultimately led to 700 wives and three hundred concubines.

Solomon's gratuitous lust drowned his once great love for God.



What corrupted Solomon's wisdom and legacy?

It's important to understand that Solomon's extraordinary gift of wisdom did not stop his moral failure.

His excessive wealth, prestige, alliances and wives deafened him to his own wisdom. As Israel's great teacher, he had preached, 'Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe' (Prov. 28:26).

Solomon, once a wise king, compromised his responsibilities and became self-obsessed. His life is scandalous. He had a privileged public position but became hypocritical and corrupt in his home.

Solomon's most glaring accusation is, 'Solomon held fast to them in love . . . his wives led him astray' (1 Kings 11:2-3).

Even with accentuated understandings, he disobeyed and embraced his women. They ruined him. It's heartbreaking to know Solomon would not let go of his sins. What Solomon loved and would not release, took him down a path of destruction.

Solomon could have had a legacy of regality and sagacity if he had remained steadfast in honour, integrity, purity and humility. It's a tragedy to learn that in his final years, he is broken, foolish, defiant and walking an evil path (1 Kings 11:3-6).



The life and reign of King Solomon should be a sobering reality check for us all.

Almost daily, we hear news from around the world indicating that ministers, pastors, priests, and church volunteers have failed in their trusted positions.

The world takes great pride in impeaching those who claim to know God and His ways. The reoccurring immorality we see in the church is a shocking indictment of selfish individuals who have surrendered to their passions, and O how they fall.

New Zealand is not exempt from such behaviour. We have leaders among us who manifest the self-admiration of Solomon, 'I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure' (Eccl. 2:10). When their harrowing failure is exposed, we shake our heads and wonder how such a thing could happen.

Being seduced by our cravings is a terrible thing.

Lessons:

We must keep our leaders accountable for their own safety and the church's integrity.

If you see sin, call it out. It may save many from heartache and destruction.

Pray for the wealthy among us. They have greater responsibilities than most.

Choose humility over position. Promote respect and beware of those who crave power.

True intelligence chooses virtue and purity as best friends.

Guard your heart at all times, day and night, in public and at home.

Guard your eyes; they are the gateway to lust.

Expel and destroy the things that could ruin you and your family.

Trust God's Word above theories, philosophies and opinions.

Beware of people who know it all; let God's Word speak the truth you need.

Listen to the wisdom from above; be determined to not compromise your faith.

As you age, draw closer to your Saviour; choose to finish well.

All people, whether kings, queens, rich or poor, qualified or unqualified, should grasp the truth that 'God is not mocked. A man reaps what he sows' (Galatians 6:7).